

AMENDMENT

U.S. Appln. No. 09/485,320

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please enter the following cancellations, amendments and/or additions.

Claims 1-2. (Cancelled).

Claim 3. (Currently Amended) A composition comprising a daidzein-containing substance, ~~and~~ at least one strain of a live microorganism capable of metabolizing daidzein to equol and at least one component that favors the maintenance and growth of the strain as essential ingredients, wherein said strain is selected from the group consisting of *Streptococcus* E-23-17, which has been deposited as FERM BP-6436, and *Streptococcus* A6G-225, which has been deposited as FERM BP-6437.

Claim 4. (Cancelled).

Claim 5. (Currently Amended) The composition according to Claim 43, wherein the component that favors the maintenance and growth of the strain of microorganism capable of metabolizing daidzein to equol is at least one substance selected from the group consisting of galactosylsucrose, soybean-oligosaccharide, lactulose, lactitol and fructo-oligosaccharide.

Claim 6. (Currently Amended) The composition according to Claim 43, wherein the daidzein-containing substance further contains at least one member selected from the group consisting of genistein, daidzin and genistin.

Claim 7. (Currently Amended) The composition according to Claim 43, wherein the daidzein-containing substance is soya isoflavone.

Claim 8. (Cancelled).

Claim 9. (Currently Amended) The composition according to Claim 4-3, wherein said composition is a food composition.

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Claim 10. (Currently Amended) The composition according to Claim 9, wherein the food composition is selected from the group consisting of a drink, dairy product, and fermented milk.

Claim 11. (Currently Amended) The composition according to Claim ~~1~~3, which is in a pharmaceutical dosage form.

Claim 12. (Currently Amended) The composition according to Claim 11, wherein the pharmaceutical dosage form is selected from the group consisting of aqueous solutions, emulsions, granules, powders, capsules and tablets.